

# Napavine School District No. 14

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September 16, 2013

Marlene H. Dortch  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: Modernizing the E-Rate Program for Schools and Libraries, WC Docket 13-184**

Dear Ms. Dortch,

We are a rural school district located in Southwestern Washington state, serving approximately 770 students in grades K-12. Our district consists of two school buildings – a grades K-6 elementary and a grades 7-12 middle/high school – and support buildings that house our administrative offices, transportation services and maintenance operations.

Napavine School District is committed to preparing students for living, learning and working in the 21st century. This is reflected in our mission statement: *"The mission of the Napavine School District is to work with the community to continue positive growth by preparing individuals in a safe and secure environment for learning, living and working responsibility in society."* However, in today's digital age, in order to achieve our mission, we need to have reliable, adequate and cost-effective access to robust, high-speed connectivity to be able provide our students with the same opportunities that their peers in much larger, urban school districts have available. While we are in close proximity to the Interstate 5 corridor and Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad main line, our rural location and limited budget still inhibits the services we have available to provide to our students.

Our free and reduced meal eligibility population was approximately 47% as of May 2013, which while low in comparison to some of our neighboring districts, is still a sign of the tough economic times that have impacted our region. For many of our families, the school is the only place available for Internet access, because they don't have access at home, either because of their economic situation or because those services aren't available to them because of where they live.

This letter offers comments related to the FCC's effort to modernize the E-rate program.

We believe:

- Universal access to broadband is necessary to meet school reform and improvement goals. These goals include the development of K-12 programming able to prepare all students for college and 21st century careers.
- The demand for access to broadband is growing rapidly beyond the ability of schools to provide it, despite the cost advantage possible through the E-rate discount.
- A modernized E-rate program must be less burdensome for schools, and aligned more effectively to current and future K-12 education priorities. There is also a growing need to help schools plan and budget for technology.
- Today's demand for the cost benefit of the E-rate program exceeds available funding. Clearly, the amount of money available for schools must increase to meet state and local needs.

We agree that it is time to modernize the E-rate program and support positive change that benefits K-12 schools. We encourage you to move quickly as you complete your deliberations.

If you have any further questions about our district, please do not hesitate to contact me at (360) 262-3303 x313.

Sincerely,



Michael Blessing  
Supervisor of Technology



Dr. Richard Jones  
Superintendent of Schools